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Governor Ehrlich Announces New Director of Emergency Management Agency

ANNAPOLIS -- Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. today announced the appointment of John W. Droneburg, III, as the new Director of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). Mr. Droneburg, who served as public safety director of Frederick County for 11 years, will lead the agency responsible for coordinating the State response to a major emergency or disaster.

"Public safety is a central pillar of the Ehrlich-Steele Administration and John Droneburg will be an invaluable addition to our homeland security team," Governor Ehrlich said. "He is eminently qualified to reorganize and strengthen our emergency management agency as part of our efforts to make Maryland a safer place to live and work."

Droneburg, in addition to serving as Frederick County's emergency manager, has performed a wide variety of emergency management and first responder duties throughout his 30-year career. He was Chief and President of a volunteer fire department, a paramedic, and a project director for the Department of Homeland Security, in addition to holding management and training positions at the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute.

Droneburg will officially take over at MEMA on January 5, 2004, leading a 51-person state agency that reports to the Maryland Military Department and provides infrastructure and logistical support to the Governor's Office of Homeland Security. MEMA provides the State with a comprehensive, all-hazards emergency management and operates the state emergency operations center. Upon activation of the emergency operations center, the MEMA director reports directly to the Governor.

One of Governor Ehrlich's priorities is to completely reorganize MEMA, making the agency more responsive to local and regional needs and better equipped to coordinate government agency resources to assist disaster victims. By reorganizing the agency, Governor Ehrlich intends to strengthen ties to law enforcement and develop a more seamless public safety system.

“MEMA’s ultimate mission must be to protect the citizens of Maryland. To meet that goal, it must work with multiple government agencies and across jurisdictional lines to be prepared and to better respond to emergencies,” Governor Ehrlich said. “That takes leadership, and when you look at John’s background, you see someone who has the track record to meet this challenge.”

Most recently, Droneburg was a project manager for the National Disaster Medical System grant, administered through the University of Maryland Baltimore County. As a program under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the National Disaster Medical System has over 50 teams nationwide comprised of doctors, nurses, EMS and other health care professionals nationwide who would mobilize during those catastrophic events that overwhelm local health care resources.

Droneburg also serves on the development council for the Frederick Memorial Hospital. He grew up and now resides in Frederick County with his wife, Deborah and family. He holds an MBA from Frostburg State University and a bachelor’s degree from Wake Forest University.

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